

**LETTERS
ON
FEMALE EDUCATION,
ADDRESSED TO A
MARRIED LADY.**

By Mrs. CARTWRIGHT.

**CONSIDER THOU WHO ART A PARENT
THE IMPORTANCE OF THY TRUST; A
WICKED SON IS A REPROACH TO HIS FA-
THER, BUT HE THAT DOETH RIGHT IS AN
HONOUR TO HIS GREY HAIRS.**

L O N D O N:

Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY.

MDCCLXXVII.

LETTERS
TO MR. MONTAGU

MADAM

CONSIDERATIONS of my inability
to produce any thing worthy the
attention of a Lady so justly renowned
ed for her literary talents, I was going
(apprehensive and apprehended) as of
for the best efforts of an infant ge-
nius to the eye of public inspection;
to the eyes of a public too often in-
clined to be prejudiced against
But Mrs. Montagu's conduct
scarcely requires any apology
little woman
not apprehended) it will be found
with a favourable opinion
The greatest part of my Remarks
will consist, I think, in a comparison
to that contained in the London
published in 1749. I should rather
to justify than to repeat—but permit
me



Yours, &c.

TO MRS. MONTAGU.

MADAM,

CONSCIOUS of my inability to produce any thing worthy the attention of a Lady so justly renowned for her literary fame, I was going (unpatronized and unprotected) to offer the first efforts of an infant genius to the eye of public inspection; to the eyes of a public too often inclined to be partial in its judgment.— But Mrs. Montagu's extreme condescension encourages me to lay this little volume at her feet, hoping (if not applauded) it will, at least, meet with a favourable reception.

The greater part of my Readers will object, I fear, to a composition so little tinctured with the seriousness peculiar to writings, intended rather to instruct than to amuse—but permit

DEDICATION.

me to observe (as a palliative to this objection) that productions calculated to improve, when dressed with an air of chearfulness, are much oftener productive of the desired effect, than when cloaked in the garb of gravity. Every woman is not a Montagu. Did the world abound with such exemplary characters, instruction would be needless. It is therefore for the benefit of those who take up a book merely with the design of passing away an idle hour, that it is necessary to blend precept with amusement.

With the highest respect of your merits, permit me, Madam, to subscribe myself,

your most obliged and

most obedient humble Servant,

Warwick Court,
Nov. 28, 1776.

H. CARTWRIGHT.

LETTERS.
ON
FEMALE EDUCATION.

LETTER I.

YOU have frequently, my dearest Sophy, intreated me to give you my sentiments on the proper management of children; and as you have ever most strictly adhered to my advice, it will give me inexpressible pleasure to grant your request: a request, which I am convinced, is the result of reason, joined to a sincere affection for the lovely pledge of a virtuous and happy union.

No one ever was more worthily esteemed when single. To the graces of person was united the most amiable disposition. With pleasure have I ob-

B served

served your continual acts of liberality, and whenever I reflected on the propriety of your conduct, indulged the pleasing hope that I should one day see you an equal ornament of the hymeneal, as you was then of the virgin state. My wishes on that head are fulfilled, and, to add to your mutual felicity, have the satisfaction to behold a lovely infant,

—Every day shew some new charm,
The father's lustre, or the mother's bloom.

It is somewhere remarked, that children are careful blessings, and such they undoubtedly are; but I am of opinion it is in the power of every parent to render the task less arduous, by an early endeavour to sow the seeds of virtue in the bosoms of their offspring. Your little Harriot is now at an age that calls

For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
To the province of a mother does

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that delightful task belong ! No longer, my dearest Sophy, let her remain in the hands of her nurse-maid : to the effects of maternal love let her be indebted for every instruction she receives during her first five years. If after that you think proper to intrust her to the care of a governess, I make no doubt but you have discernment sufficient to chuse a person who has ability to improve, and form the manners of her pupil in such a degree, as shall render her an useful ornament to society, and a blessing to her parents.

There is nothing but I would do to convince you of my esteem, or to promote your happiness. The sincerity of my friendship prompts me to interest myself in the welfare of your daughter : for her sake, my dear, I will now give you my thoughts on education, and as conversation is ever liable to be broken in upon, (though

at no greater distance) I think it will be better in an epistolary way, (if you pay me the compliment of preserving my letters) as they may in some future period be serviceable to your Harriot.

On parents it depends whether their children shall prove a blessing, or a curse; whether they shall be a comfort to their age, or bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

On the basis of religion must the foundation of their happiness be laid, and the existence of a supreme and invisible Being, the first knowledge that is imprinted on their tender minds.

When nature prompts them to take notice of the various beauties of creation, teach them to believe, that to the hand of an all-merciful and beneficent Creator do we owe their formation; that they are sent us as the reward and encouragement of virtue, and that to act in opposition to the divine will,
would

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would be the surest means to deprive us of every benefit we now enjoy.

Instead of terrifying their weak imaginations by a representation of a thousand frightful monsters, to whom they are to be consigned when they commit a fault; or flattering them with delusive promises to bribe them to their duty; teach them to be good for virtue's sake. Tell them that an all-seeing eye is witness even to their most private faults, and that to heaven they must look for their reward or punishment.

But though I have an utter aversion to every kind of bribery, I am the most strenuous advocate for encouragement. A good action, should, in my sentiments, be ever followed by some little present, to shew them that merit is sure to meet with its reward; but, at the same time, they should be convinced, that though praised, they have not the least pretensions to vanity,

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as in doing right they have done no more than their duty.

There are many of opinion that children of three or four years of age are too young to attend public worship, but from them I greatly deviate. It is true, at that age a child cannot be thought to understand the full explanation of prayer and thanksgiving; but though not capable of accompanying a congregation in those solemn acts of devotion, they may be inspired with a reverential awe of their divine Creator, and, by a constant attendance at the house of God, be brought to an early practice of piety and religion. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Many there are, who, instead of aiming to fill the hearts of their offspring with an exalted notion of that Deity before whom they are going to prostrate themselves, are studious only to adorn them

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them in such a manner as shall best attract the attention of their acquaintance; and are never better pleased than when they return with remarks on the dress of every one present. "What an observing child it is! never did I know such a memory!" exclaims the fond mistaken parent. Alas! they consider not that their ill-timed praise may be a source of misery to their hoary heads!

If, instead of paying proper attention to their devotions, they amuse themselves in pointing out the defects, or in admiring the ornaments of their companions, what are we to expect, but that immorality and impiety will next succeed?

Such a disposition as this cannot be too early checked, nor sufficient pains taken to eradicate the baneful poison from their hearts. How much more satisfactory to hear a child when it returns from the house of God (if in-

terrogated on the subject) repeat the heads of a sermon; or at least, if their memory is too young to retain more, refer you to the text.

What a fund of felicity has the happy parent of such an offspring to expect! how pleasing the task of encouraging the little angel in its pursuit of virtue and morality! If it be the will of heaven to call them to the blissful regions of eternity, if any unforeseen accident cuts short their thread of life, we can then, without murmuring, resign them to their fate, and console ourselves with the blessed hope, that their spotless soul is gone to receive the reward due unto the righteous.

Think not, my dear, that I should like to see your children worse dressed than your neighbours; on the contrary, I would always wish them to appear with the greatest decency. But in infancy, as well as in more advanced

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ed age, neatness should be ever aimed at more than finery. So far from having an aversion to young people's adorning themselves on the sabbath, I think it both laudable and praiseworthy; and am never more exasperated than when I hear a thoughtless conceited girl, exclaim, "It is never worth while to put on my best cloaths to-day, I am only going to church. If I was going to pay a visit it would be quite another affair."

Such a conduct as this I think equally as blameable, as it is to dress only with a view of attracting admiration; for who among our acquaintance, be they ever so numerous, to whom more honour is due than to the author of our being? it is therefore treating him with the greatest irreverence to enter his dwelling in a habit in which we should be ashamed to appear in the house of a friend.

Excuse

Excuse me, my dear, if I am rather tedious in my digressions; what I mean to infer is, that they should be made sensible that even their dress is not in honour to themselves, but their Creator; and at the same time should be taught, that though it is the duty of every one (who is blest with the means) to appear decent in the sight of God, yet will he accept the prayers of a sincere and penitent heart, even in the most tattered garment.

Let them not therefore assume a superiority over those whom providence has placed in a more humble sphere, but remember that the time will come, when the rich and poor shall stand an equal chance of inheriting a crown of glory.

This, my dear Sophy, is the first impression that should be stamped on the heart of your little Harriot. The seeds of religion once sown, every virtue will spring forth, and by an early practice

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practice of good works she will become a favourite both of God and man, and an honour to the parent who so prudently laid the foundation of her happiness. You shall soon hear from me again, till when, my dear friend,

I remain your

most sincere, &c.

LETTER

LETTER II.

AFTER their duty towards God, their duty towards their neighbour is the next lesson a child should be taught. The great rule of doing as we would be done by, cannot be too often repeated, nor too early instilled into the heart of youth.

When they treat their companions with pride and unkindness, endeavour to convince them that they are bringing dishonour on themselves. Ask them if they should receive such usage without styling it an injury? and whether they are not acting in direct opposition to the will of that God, who has commanded them to love one another? Tell them if they can, on reflection, bring themselves to think that their conduct is consistent with charity and good neighbourhood, they may pursue it with impunity; but if not, to desist

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desist immediately from a folly, that, if continued, will render them despised by all their acquaintance.

As soon as they are capable of distinguishing the different kinds of English coin, and their separate value, I would have every child intrusted with small sums of money; not that I mean to encourage in them an habit of extravagance, but from the use they make of it a parent may first discover the bent of their inclinations, and by making them keep a regular account of what they expend, accustom them to an early practice of oeconomy.

It is natural for children to be anxious of possessing a variety of toys, and equally so to be desirous of fruit, cakes, or in short every thing they see in the hands of their companions; and if not in their power to purchase them, it is generally productive of envy, covetousness, and oft-times a desire of obtaining that by fraud which they cannot

cannot otherwise make their own. This, though of but little moment to the unthinking part of the world, is to me a matter of the most serious consideration; and I was ever of opinion that, from the source above mentioned, crimes of the most flagrant nature derive their first origin.

By making them their own purse-bearer, you repose in them such a confidence as binds them in point of honour to use it with discretion: and at the same time, by setting down their expences, it gives them a notion of book-keeping, and is no small means of improving them in arithmetic.

When they give up their accounts (which should be at furthest every month) whatever you find amiss pass it over in silence, till, by returning it them for retrospection, they discover that they have been unprofitable and unjust stewards. If then they appear sensible that they have mis-
used

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used their talent, point out to them the particular sums that have been expended foolishly; and at the same time give them an idea of the manner in which it should have been employed to have redounded to their honour; but whenever you correct, let tenderness be blended with reproof.

If any part of it has been appropriated to charitable uses, even though the objects of it have been undeserving, encourage the godlike virtue; lest, by convincing them they have been deceived, you throw a damp on the most amiable of all christian excellencies. It may not however be amiss, if you can (without appearing to oppose their inclinations) contrive to shew them distresses that are real objects of charity, and teach them to distinguish between those who only wish to eat the bread of their own labour, and those who have no other plan

plan in life but to get through it in sloth and ignorance.

To feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, should be the task of every one who is blest with an affluent fortune. I know a lady who entertains so high a sense of this duty, that instead of employing her woman about her own person, keeps her to attend to the improvement of six little girls, whom she has taken out of charity, and keeps constantly at work for the relief of the necessitous. They have a wardrobe which, by their industry, is always well stocked with every kind of linen; and whenever a poor neighbour is brought to bed, or a miserable object comes shivering to the door for want of covering to screen them from the cold, the hand of charity is extended to relieve them.

This duty, in a less degree, might be practised in every family which is placed above the reach of want; and
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how much more satisfactory would be the reflection of having been serviceable to our fellow-creatures, than to have spent our time in the pursuit of ideal pleasures ; pleasures which are incapable of affording any real enjoyment to the possessor !

If our young women were to dedicate their leisure hours to an employment of this nature, instead of spending them at the card-table, or in reading novels and romances, which tend only to vitiate their morals and corrupt their hearts, they would become both agreeable and useful members of society ; but, (sorry I am to say it) most of our modern-bred ladies look upon the two latter to be the only accomplishments necessary for a woman of fashion.

You, my dear Sophy, are not to be numbered among that dissipated circle : pleasures far more refined engage your attention ; and when I behold

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with what uncommon delicacy and address you disperse your bounty, I rejoice to see you in full power of exerting your exalted generosity; for an ability to soften the calamities of the wretched, and inspire gladness into a heart oppressed with misfortunes, is surely the noblest privilege of an enlarged fortune.

But to return to my subject. Children, if properly attended to, might, from their earliest years, be taught to render themselves both useful and agreeable: and I look upon it in a great measure to be owing to their own neglect, that so many parents complain of bad dispositions in their children; nay, I cannot help sometimes secretly condemning them of introducing such vices into their habits, for surely it is entertaining the most unworthy notions of the Deity, to suppose he forms mankind with a propensity to evil.

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It is the duty of every mother to be perfectly satisfied of the dispositions of those whom she intrusts with the care of her children; for as they are ever fond of those who treat them with most kindness, they are by far the more likely to imbibe the bad qualities of an attendant who indulges them; and, on the contrary, if your domestics are of a sober prudent turn, they must undoubtedly profit by good example. Indolence is productive of every species of vice; they should, therefore, be ever employed in doing something, from which themselves or others may receive benefit; and though it is not in the power of those in a middling sphere of life to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, it is in the power of every person to be of some service to their fellow-creatures.

Where children are of an haughty imperious temper, and appear insensible to the misery of others, our ut-

most diligence should be employed in endeavouring to humanize their dispositions. Every object, whose distresses render them worthy of compassion, should be represented to them in the most striking colours, and nothing neglected that may be a means of exciting the tender feelings of humanity. If they have a taste for reading, many stories may be selected, that, (though fictitious) may be greatly instrumental in producing the seeds of charity and benevolence; for, if moved by imaginary distresses, there is the greatest reason to hope they will not long be inattentive to real ones.

There is one thing I have often observed in parents surrounded by a lovely and numerous offspring, that has created in me the most painful emotions; this is their permitting them to exercise their rage on dogs, cats, birds, and other domestic animals: often have I felt the severest pang to see
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them at a window sporting with the lives of little buzzing insects that every moment fall a sacrifice to their wanton cruelty ; for there is every reason to believe that the sensations of the smallest of the insect-tribe are as exquisite as those of creatures of the most enlarged dimension.

The child who is thus fondly and foolishly indulged, promises the most melancholy prospect ; and by being unrestrained in sports of this kind, may acquire by habit what they would never have learned from nature, and grow up in a confirmed inattention to every kind of suffering but their own.

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LETTER

LETTER III.

BY the discerning part of mankind it has ever been allowed that with children example goes far beyond precept. It therefore behoves every mother to be watchful of her own conduct, and endeavour as much as possible to prevent excess of passion in her husband.

Where harmony does not subsist among their parents, it is too commonly seen that children give an unbridled loose to every impulse; and instead of becoming good and dutiful, their emulation is constantly engaged in imitating the acts of tyranny they every day see practised.

If they have a proper regard for the interest of their little ones, the greatest propriety should be observed in their whole deportment, in particular in their behaviour to servants and infe-

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riors. Where a parent treats her domestics with pride and ill-nature, not considering them as creatures formed by the divine hand who gave her birth, but as meerly created to humour her caprices, and be a slave to her passions, she sets the most shocking example to her children, and instead of making herself respected, her unkind behaviour renders her an object of detestation, both in the eyes of her own family, and of every other that may happen to be connected with it.

Few, indeed, there are who have a sufficient share of skill to unite authority with kindness, or that have discernment enough to conduct themselves in such a manner as to maintain their dignity while they exact the most attentive obedience; but we should remember that human nature is the same in every station, and have a generous regard to whatever concerns

the health, interest, or innocent amusements of our servants.

If they commit a blunder, either through inattention, ignorance, or any other motive, never chide them in public; such ill-timed reproof increases their confusion, and generally draws inconvenience on ourselves, by occasioning a second mistake: but in private take the first opportunity of shewing them their error, and that, not with the authority of an offended mistress, but with the good-nature and candour of a friend; this will heighten their respect and gain their affection.

On the other hand, it is equally absurd to treat a domestic with any degree of familiarity beyond what is necessary to keep within the bounds of good-nature and affability.

To make a confidant of them is a derogation from your dignity, and not only lessens your own authority, but,
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in a manner, obliges you to overlook their errors, and be privy to follies for the commission of which you would dismiss them your service, did not the fear of their disclosing your secrets prevail over every other consideration.

This, though the greatest is not the only inconveniency attending it: these unjust and weak distinctions will certainly excite the envy and ill-will of the rest of your servants, and by giving her the superiority (which a favorite is sure to make her advantage of) will occasion a continual change in the family; and as none will dare to expose the faults of one whom her mistress patronises, you will be kept in ignorance of her vices, be they ever so conspicuous in the eyes of other people. This, my dear, should engage you to endear yourself to all your domestics, but ever most cautiously avoid partiality to any.

Those

Those who wish to see their children truly amiable, should also endeavour as much as possible to maintain a proper government over their own temper : resignation, and patience in sickness or adversity ; a heart melting at the calamities of the wretched, and a readiness to relieve their wants ; a soul serenely contented amidst every change of life, are the distinguishing characteristics of a good christian, and a good parent : while, on the contrary, a fretful, peevish, and vindictive woman, who is neither happy herself, nor will permit any one around her to be so, is a nuisance to society, and not only ruins the peace of her family, but is also the source of every folly, every indiscretion, they may chance to fall into.

Should a child happen to take ill courses, or, by the force of persuasion, be tempted to the commission of any capital offence, how comfortable !

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how satisfactory must it be, to have it in our power to reflect, that neither want of care, nor the more potent force of example hath been instrumental to their ruin. To sit down with the heart-felt satisfaction of having done our duty is surely all we can desire ; that done, we must leave the rest to an all-wise providence, who sees best what is necessary to the happiness of his creatures.

There are some kind of people who, for the sake of what they are pleased to term a joke, are guilty of the most evident falshoods. This they term not a breach of veracity ! though, according to my sentiments it may justly be ranked among the most egregious and unpardonable of follies ! What infinite distresses has the indulgence of this hateful passion given birth to. I am, at this time, acquainted with several who have experienced from it the most fatal effects : one young lady
in

in particular who, from the rectitude of her own heart, did not suppose it possible that God's reasonable creatures could take delight in torturing each other, has been made miserable for life.

Herself and one amiable brother were the offspring of a virtuous and auspicious marriage; the bounteous hand of nature had bestowed on each, all the virtues that adorn the mind, all the graces that give lustre to the person. Till the age of twenty they were inseparable. In every act of goodness, like two well-tuned instruments, they seemed to act in concert with each other, neither outdid, but both excelled in virtue!

Uninterrupted felicity is not the lot of mortals! A rich uncle dying abroad, (and who had bequeathed them a considerable fortune,) made it necessary the father should go over. A fit of the gout would not permit him to under-

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undertake the voyage, and the young gentleman was sent in his stead. The parting between two such dear and amiable relations may be better imagined than described.

About three weeks afterwards the young lady (whom I shall call Alinda) was spending the day with an old acquaintance at Richmond. As they were drinking tea in a pavilion in the garden; a gentleman, who paid his addresses to a lady in the family, happened to drop in: at first their discourse turned upon indifferent topics, till Alinda (who eagerly embraced every opportunity of gaining intelligence of her brother) asked him if the papers had given an account of the ship being arrived at the destined port? “ Good heavens ! my dear “ Miss P——,” (affecting a surprise) “ sure I am not unfortunate enough “ to be the first messenger of ill- “ news ! you must certainly have “ heard

"heard before this, that the vessel
 "your brother embarked in is cast a-
 "way, and most of the crew perished.
 "Mr. P——, however, I hope was
 "not among the number of the un-
 "fortunate."

By this time the roses had forsook
 poor Alinda's face; she uttered a faint
 scream, and sunk into the arms of her
 companion. "What have I done!"
 exclaimed the barbarous jester: "in-
 "deed, my dear Alinda, I did but
 "joke."

Weak, cruel man! it was then too
 late to undeceive her! From conti-
 nual faintings she fell into strong con-
 vulsions, and in that situation was con-
 veyed to her chamber, and an express
 immediately sent to London for one
 of the most skilful of the faculty to
 attend her.

Doctor F—— came, but was
 doubtful that the disorder of his fair
 patient would terminate in a delirium.

For

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For some weeks her case baffled all the powers of medicine, and her weeping parents expected every day to see the last of their beloved child; they wrote the melancholy news to their son, and, by the advice of the physician, desired him to return as soon as possible to see what effect his presence might have on the spirits of his unfortunate sister. By degrees they, at proper intervals, prepared her to expect him, but it was with the greatest difficulty they could persuade her he was living. The distress of the poor young gentleman, on receiving this intelligence, was inconceivable: he dispatched his business with the greatest expedition, and bespoke a passage in the first vessel that was bound for England; determined, as soon as he had paid a visit to his sister, to demand restitution of the man who had thus cruelly endangered her life, and clouded the happiness of a worthy family.

As soon as it was known that he was landed, her mother flew to her apartment, and, with joy unfeigned, acquainted her dear Alinda, that in a few hours she might expect to see her brother. In half the proposed time, he arrived, and fortunately for herself, fortunately for her parents! this interview had the desired effect.

From that hour her illness began to abate, and in course of time she resumed her health: but the innocent and agreeable vivacity, for which she was before distinguished, totally forsook her, and upon every trifling alarm her fair face is distorted with fits of the most unconquerable nature.

By the persuasion of his friends the young gentleman was prevailed on to stifle his resentment, and took no other method of revenge, but that of writing a long letter to the destroyer of his sister's happiness, in which he most severely and judiciously expatiated on
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the folly of indulging so injurious a passion, and intreated him in the warmest manner never more to be guilty of so unpardonable a folly.

Some, whose notions of honour are too romantic to listen to the advice of parents (however nearly it concerns their interest) would rather have looked upon this procedure to be the effect of cowardice than lenity; but the truly noble-minded will applaud the youth who preferred the happiness of his parents to the love of fame. He did not, however, go unpunished: the young lady, to whom he paid his addresses, was most warmly attached to Alinda, and her notions of friendship perfectly agreed with the poet,

One should our interests and our pleasures be,
My friend must hate the man who injures me.

From the day that her lover so cruelly displayed his wit, she banished him from her presence and her heart.

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Whenever he endeavoured to vindicate himself, she very prudently told him, that a man, whose veracity was forfeited on every trivial occasion, should be shunned by all women of character, and assured him in the most serious terms, that she could never more think of encouraging the addressee of one who had taken such infinite pains to convince her of his unmanly and ungenerous disposition.

In the same manner, my dear Sophy, should every one be used who prefers their jest to their friend. I look upon a disposition of this kind to be destructive to society, and it gives me particular concern when I observe it indulged by those who are surrounded with a train of little ones, ready to catch every sound that issues from a parent's mouth. People of this turn were ever my aversion; and when once acquainted with their deceptious humour, all they could urge would never prevail

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on me to give credit to any thing they said. By this means many, who would otherwise have pretensions to our assistance, remain unpitied ; because, accustomed to their delusions, we look upon the most pathetic story as meant only to deceive us. Truth, undisguised truth ! though told to ever so great a disadvantage, must be ever esteemed preferable to the wiles of imposition.

Another species of deception that I would warn a parent against, is that of breaking of promises : the most trifling one that can be made to a child should be most religiously adhered to, otherwise you teach them a horrid lesson of deceit, and furnish them with weapons to fight against yourself. They should be taught that no bond binds like the word of an honest man : and therefore to be cautious of promising any thing to the disadvantage

of themselves or others, but, what they have resolved faithfully to perform.

An inability to discharge a debt at the appointed time, is, I believe, more often the cause of this breach of duty than any other; and of all others has rather more claim to an excuse, as it is not always the effect of self-will, but occasioned by accident, misfortune, or a concurrence of disappointments. Those, whose affairs are in a precarious situation, should be extremely careful not to fix an early time of payment, unless perfectly convinced that it will be in their power to fulfill their promise: for far better it is to appoint a distant period, and be faithful, than to delude your friend by assurances that you have no intention of performing.

Many there are in the world who, by a fallacious appearance of honesty, have credit sufficient to procure any immediate sum they have occasion for,
and,

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and, as a recompence to the friendly hand that assisted them, involve, an innocent family in distress, and triumph over their credulity. How barbarous ! how superlatively base is such a conduct ! We ought not to wait for a demand when it is in our power to pay the debts we owe ; but remember that he who gave us credit relied upon our honour, and to withhold from him his due is both mean and unjust.

The third kind of falshood a child should be warned against, is that of endeavouring to conceal a fault by dissimulation and hypocrisy : to have erred ever so egregiously, is trifling in comparison to the guilt we bring upon ourselves, “ by disguising our words, “ in the semblance of truth, while we “ mean only to deceive.” Instead of extenuating an offence, it greatly adds to it, and is much more to be condemned than the fault itself. Preva-

rication is equally censurable: they should be taught to blush, even at the very idea of falshood, to scorn the meanness of dissimulation, and the words of their mouth should be the words of their heart.

The length of this letter, and the unconnected manner in which I have given you my sentiments, will convince you, my dearest Sophy, that I aim not so much at propriety, as at the improvement of the little cherub, who I hope will one day reap the benefit of our correspondence: but as there is no great probability of my letters falling into the hands of critical reviewers, I flatter myself the good lady, to whom they are addressed, will not only pardon every defect she may chance to meet with, but accept them as the work of friendship, and as a token of my sincere affection to herself and family.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

THE greatest care and delicacy should be observed in the choice of those whom you select as COMPANIONS to your children; for if addicted to any vicious habits, be assured it is injurious to their morals. A submissive obedience to their parents, a condescending obligingness and sweet affability to their play-mates, and a modest and unexceptionable deportment, should mark the character of those you fix upon as objects of their attention and esteem. The example of such will create in them a virtuous emulation to equal them in goodness, and by aiming to excel them, they will be crowned with honour, even though they should fail of success.

How few are there (you will say) that in the days of childhood have been capable of arriving at the pitch

of excellence I have mentioned? All this is granted: but that there are some few, I make no doubt; and such I hope, for the sake of your Harriot, are to be found among the numerous and estimable circle of your acquaintance.

It has ever been my observation, that an amiable, discreet, and religious parent, is generally happy in children who imitate her virtues: such Mrs. —, and such, I dare affirm, are her beauteous offspring.

The tender years of your daughter render such restrictions rather more unnecessary than they will be five or six years hence; but remember, my dearest Sophy, they are never too young to imbibe bad habits, or to acquire good ones.

While young, their acquaintance cannot be confined within too narrow a circle. One or two, about their own age, is far better than more; with those they may be allowed to pass their
hours

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hours of play, but the greatest caution should be observed in permitting them to return the visits of their little friends. By way of accustoming them to observation, it may not be amiss to encourage them on such occasions to relate every little circumstance that has occurred, and to point out the defects and omissions they have remarked in the behaviour of their companions; but this not as an incitement, either to curiosity or scandal, but that, by a retrospection of their neighbours imperfections, they may take a transient view of their own, and by degrees acquire the art of self-examination.

Whenever they commit a fault they will, by this means, discover it themselves; and this self-conviction will not only humble them in their own opinion, but consequently beget shame; and the acknowledgment of their error prove a far better means of reconciliation

ciliation than the most rigid and severe reproof.

Whenever you find it necessary to correct, be perfectly assured that the misdemeanor, for which you are going to reprove them, proceeds from a culpable emotion; for very often that, which in the end proves an error, is the effect of a laudable intention: you should therefore interrogate them seriously on the subject, and endeavour as much as possible to discover the true motive of their offence; and if there be the most trifling reason to suppose they may have erred through inadvertence, ignorance, or, as it sometimes happens, from a good intention, they should have an opportunity of clearing themselves, lest, by punishing them wrongfully, they imagine their own good emotions to be the cause of their correction.

I would, however, on all occasions, recommend gentleness rather than severity

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verity and harsh treatment ; but, at the same time, that the greatest caution be observed not to run into the contrary extreme ; for though hard stripes add fuel to a turbulent disposition, too much indulgence is productive of effects equally to be dreaded, as it encourages them in every breach of duty that disappoints their selfish inclinations.

In regard to their literary improvements and polite accomplishments ; the sphere of life in which she is placed should point out to every mother the proper medium.

Where the fortune is extensive, nothing should be neglected that can improve the manners and adorn the mind. Reading, needle-work, music, dancing, drawing, and every other ornamental and useful piece of knowledge are the proper attainments. The first of these cannot be too early, nor too seriously attended to, as it is impossible without it, either to know
ourselves

ourselves, or acquire any degree of knowledge in the world, and is, at the same time that it improves, the most amusing, as well as instructive part of education. Needle-work is also another desirable acquirement in a young lady, and, where the fortune is moderate, is a necessary part of her duty, as a considerable article of expence may be saved by it, and as much as can be done, with a due attention to their health, and every other improvement I should look upon as highly commendable; but as too much confinement is extremely prejudicial to the constitution, I would not wish you, my dear, to keep your daughter too closely at her needle, for some years to come.

The embellishment of her mind should now be the greatest object of your attention; to which end, as soon as she has gone through the old and new testament, you must direct her
choice

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choice to such authors as your own judgment best approves. Works that are not only calculated to entertain the imagination and interest the heart, but in which are to be found the most excellent lessons of virtue and morality.

Dancing, and a knowledge of the French and Italian languages are next to be considered, as they now form a part in the education of every female, whose parents have the least pretensions to taste; and indeed the two first may justly be stiled useful as well as ornamental.

The former is in the highest degree beneficial to the health, as it at the same time not only improves the carriage, but forms, exercises, and strengthens the body. The latter (as there are many productions in the French language not inferior to our own in their purity of style, and much better calculated to amuse the fair)

affords an extensive fund of rational entertainment. Thus both in their different departments may be looked upon as very desirable attainments.

Among those, whose scene of action is confined to the gay world, Italian is equally necessary, but, in my sentiments, not at all essential to the education of a private gentlewoman: it may not, however, be amiss to acquire some little knowledge in it, if it can be done without interfering with other duties; for by no means should more useful improvements be neglected for one, that, in the course of years, may not prove of the least degree serviceable.

Music and drawing should next be attended to, as they are both pleasing and requisite accomplishments; but in a middling sphere of life, the former must fall under the same predicament as Italian, as the chief advantage

FEMALE EDUCATION. 47

tage derived from it, is that of amusement.

In the education of ladies, whose fortunes are moderate, we should study the useful rather than the ornamental. Drawing, if properly attended to, may prove a very beneficial as well as amusive employment, and is indeed a necessary acquirement for almost every rank of females. If fortune casts on them her frowns, it affords a genteel subsistence to the industrious mind; and amidst the smiles of affluence is an inestimable fund of innocent delight. In a word, it is a science highly deserving of cultivation, and worthy the pursuit of every woman blest with the gifts of sense and genius.

Writing and arithmetic, it is almost unnecessary to mention, as there are now very few, but what have some little knowledge of both. But, to the shame of our sex be it spoken, very
few

few have arrived at any pitch of excellence in the former.

There are many indeed whose penmanship is not to be found fault with, but at the same time are so totally deficient in orthography, that it needs an interpreter to make out their unintelligible jargon. To what cause must we attribute this deficiency? A female, in whose education no expence has been spared, and who is capable of benefiting by every other species of instruction, cannot surely have any excuse to plead! Want of observation is the only cause I can ascribe it to; and that, as the pursuit would be attended with very little trouble, is altogether inexcusable. I think it is in the Busy Body, that Sir George Meanwell, upon being presented with a letter, exclaims, "From a Woman
" I see! by the false spelling on the
" superscription."

What

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What a reflection does he cast upon our sex! Such a one that I should imagine must deter every woman who has not a capacity to write with propriety, from ever engaging in a literary correspondence; for how extremely painful must it be to find the man (whose good opinion is necessary to our happiness) triumph in our ignorance; and while he flatters our vanity, laugh secretly at the weakness of our understanding. Were we to consult our own happiness, we should be extremely cautious of exposing the illiterateness of a mind, that neither improves itself by experience nor instruction. A woman who is not wise enough to conceal her own imperfection is in a pitiable situation indeed! and totally unfit for the companion of a man of sense. However amiable his disposition, her life must be a continued series of mortification, if possessed of a sufficient share of sensibili-

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ty to discover his superiority in point of judgment.

Some indeed there are who affect to be proud of their ignorance, and disclaim all knowledge, but that of the *bon ton*; a resource in which I should imagine there was but small consolation.

May your Harriot (though I wish her not to be acquainted with the learned languages, unless strongly impelled by genius) attain a thorough knowledge of her own, and as she increases in years, increase in wisdom. May her every pursuit in learning be crowned with success; and by unwearied application may she arrive at the highest pitch of excellence of which human nature is capable. This, my dear Sophy, is the fervent wish of your

Sincerely affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

THE next subject I shall treat upon, is the mistaken notion that is now generally adopted of over-awing young people. This I look upon to be equally dangerous as the contrary extreme. In every thing a just mean should be observed, but particularly so in the management of children.

Where they are too much confined, and denied the privilege of every innocent diversion, nothing is to be expected but that they will effect some means to procure that by stealth which they cannot otherwise attain. Instead of creating in them an awe and reverence for their parents, it is productive of envy, hatred, perverseness, and in short such a train of evils as must for ever sour the temper, and render

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the sweetest disposition quite unamiable.

Whenever I behold a dissipated young woman flying from one place of public amusement to another, and whose life is one continued course of irregularities, instead of condemning her levity, I throw all the blame upon those who have had the care of her education, and sincerely lament her having fallen into hands so incapable of guiding the steps of youth.

How often does it happen in life, that a young man who has been treated with the greatest rigour, and confined like a prisoner during his minority, is by the unexpected death of his relations put in possession of a large estate: but alas! how incapable of enjoying it like a rational being! Unaccustomed to liberty he knows not the method of using it with discretion, but has no sooner the reins in his own hands than he launches into every extrav-

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travagance that fortune can procure, every folly that fancy can invent! His ignorance of the world renders him the prey of every libertine that will take the trouble of initiating him in the vices and dissipations of the age: all who will encourage and join in his debaucheries are welcome at his board.

The fortune which has perhaps been acquired with labour and pain, is wasted in riots and licentiousness; and he who so profusely squandered it in luxuries, lives to lament even the common necessities of life.

This, my dear Sophy, is the effect of too much rigour; this the reason why such numbers every day fall victims to intemperance!

A parent who is desirous of insuring the affection of her children, should never unite austerity with her commands, but endeavour to exact obedience in such a manner as to procure

their confidence while she gains their esteem. It is certainly proper they should treat their parents with due respect and reverence; but as they advance in years, they are also intitled to some degree of familiarity, and should by no means be treated as strangers in their father's house. As soon as they are capable of conversing, reserve should be banished, and free liberty allowed them to express their sentiments on every subject; for it certainly is unreasonable to enjoin silence, unless in a season in which it would be impertinent to talk; and if never allowed the benefit of conversation, how is it possible they should enlarge their ideas, or improve their taste?

So far from being of opinion that a young lady cannot be too reserved in company, I think nothing more painful and disgusting, than to see them sit like statues without sense or motion, and cannot help thinking that they
are

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are either deficient in understanding, or that their attention is wholly engaged in making some ill-natured remarks on the company.

Those who are continually reminding their children that they should never speak, only when spoken to, are doing them the most apparent injury; for such a restriction, instead of making them respectable, often draws upon them the reputation of ideots. Are you desirous of their becoming agreeable members of society? permit them not only to join in conversation, but also to ask the meaning of any subject that may appear to them abstruse, and encourage them on every occasion to behave ingenuously. If their judgment be erroneous, you have then an opportunity of correcting it; and by accustoming them to an open frankness in their behaviour, are in no danger of their acting in opposition to your will.

To prevent them from acquiring too great a propensity for going abroad, endeavour to make home as agreeable to them as prudence and discretion will permit ; and if your rank in life will admit of it, instead of public amusements indulge them with little parties of pleasure within the circle of your own acquaintance ; such whose society will rather tend to improve than vitiate their morals.

Even among grown-up people it is necessary the mind should be sometimes unbent ; it is therefore to the highest degree unreasonable to deny them the benefit of innocent relaxation ; and at the same time extremely impolitic, as it gives an additional relish to their studies, and is a means of their pursuing them with far greater vigour. By a continual variation of the scene, within your own family, it prevents a desire of forming new connections ; and while their time is thus

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divided

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divided between the works of duty and of pleasure, they will have no occasion to complain of *ennui* or to wish for greater liberty, but may candidly acknowledge

That freedom is tasteless, and roving a pain.

A mother who possesses the delicate art of treating her children with unre-served freedom, and, while she makes them her companions, so properly maintains her dignity as to prevent their losing sight of the awe and respect they owe to her as a parent, may rest assured that her maternal care will be rewarded by a fund of inexhaustible felicity; and that the precepts she so judiciously imparts, will make a much more durable impression than those conveyed by despotic and arbitrary means.

If they have doubts concerning the propriety of any thing they are going to undertake, or engage in, they will then freely unbo-som their scruples, and
instead

instead of trusting to their own judgment, wait till authorised by the concurrence of a parent, whose opinion they ever esteem preferable to their own, and on every occasion consult her happiness rather than their inclinations.

While in spite of prejudice they dare openly avow their sentiments, and harbour neither hope nor fear which they are ashamed to own, we need be under no apprehension of their giving way to temptation; for, conscious of their integrity, there is no one will dare assail them, lest the sincerity of their hearts should prompt them to expose their seducer. It is therefore on all accounts the duty of a parent to treat their offspring as friends deserving their confidence, rather than as slaves constrained to obey them.

Was this maxim more generally adopted, the number of unhappy matches would not so daily increase;
for

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for it is to a conduct the reverse of that above mentioned, to which so many owe the source of all their misery. Where an austere parent renders their life a burthen by continually opposing their inclinations and keeping them under the most abject government, their only resource is marriage : this they precipitate themselves into, without being influenced either by affection, or interest, but merely to release themselves from a home that constraint has rendered disagreeable ; and, to free themselves from tyranny, unthinkingly rush into a state from which (however miserable it may prove) there is no release to be obtained till death dissolves the tie.

But though I blame the parent who, from her incapacity to govern her family, reduces them to the cruel necessity of seeking liberty at the expence of their future happiness, I also equally condemn the child who is
weak

weak enough to suffer her reason so greatly to mislead her. If commanded to do any thing that appears to them unreasonable, or forbad to partake of any favourite amusement, they should remember that they who gave them life, have an indisputed right to command the services of it, and that it is their duty to abstain from whatever has the disapprobation of their parents, though ever so desirable to themselves. If the effort be painful, they should call resolution and patience to their aid, and, however unsuccessful they may be in their endeavours to please, content themselves with the reflection of having acted consistent with their duty, and gain so great a mastery over their temper, as to continue indefatigably diligent to frame their manners according to the wishes of those, who have a right to every reasonable mark of their obedience.

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Such a conduct, though the exertion of it may cost some little pain, must be a comfortable reflection to themselves, and upon a mind capable of impression would have the greatest tendency to produce a change. A mother, who possessed the least sensibility, could not behold an amiable child bending to her headstrong rigid disposition, (and on every occasion continue stedfast and immoveable in the cause of duty, though ever so much provoked to forsake it) without melting into tenderness, and considering herself as a barbarian who exerts unlimited authority ! This, and this only is the method to subdue a morose, unsociable, and imperious temper ! if this fails, patience is the only remedy, and there is still left the satisfaction of knowing they have done every thing in their power to merit approbation, though the attempt has unfortunately proved fruitless.

How

How exemplary was the conduct of Miss Craven ! bereft of a tender father in her infancy, she was left to the management of a mother who possessed not a single virtue, and her most ruling foible that of paying too much attention to herself, and too little to her daughter. Poor Nancy was committed to the care of an ignorant selfish chambermaid, who, to ingratiate herself with her mistress, was continually complaining of the bad disposition of her little charge, and represented her as one incapable of receiving benefit by instruction, and on whom it was in vain to bestow unnecessary trouble. Mrs. Craven, wholly taken up with her own pleasures, readily believed every thing she said, and gave herself no farther concern, than to order her maid not to be sparing of correction, and, if that failed, leave her to pursue her own stupid course.

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The first part of this command was most punctually complied with: glad of an opportunity of displaying her authority, she exercised it to a degree of cruelty; and the poor young lady, unable to subsist under so much rigour, watched an opportunity of her mama's being alone, and in the most submissive manner begged to know if it was her desire that she should receive so much ill-usage from the hands of a domestic, adding, at the same time, "I am entirely ignorant by what means I offend her, but every thing I do is found fault with, nor can I persuade her to tell me by what means to gain her goodwill."

"I shall not give myself any trouble about it, Nancy," replied the unnatural mother; "Mrs. Martha is a very good kind of woman, and I dare say never corrects but when it is necessary; if you was to attend
" to

“ to her instructions you would become a good woman too.”

“ Indeed, mama, she never instructs me. Whenever I ask her to teach me any thing, she falls into a passion, calls me a dunce, and instead of setting me right beats me in the most cruel manner. I really cannot think she had ever any education herself; for, indeed, if she would take the trouble of shewing me, I should, with a great deal of pleasure, endeavour to improve.”

Nancy's observation on Mrs. Martha was very right: she was totally destitute of learning, but covered the defect by affectation, and a few airs of consequence she had borrowed from her mistress; it was not therefore to be wondered that she substituted correction in the place of instruction, as the former was a science she was most versed in.

Mrs.

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Mrs. C—— was not, however, so easily persuaded to believe the deficiency in the understanding of her favourite; but dismissing her daughter from her presence, desired, with an imperious tone, that she would make no more complaints on pain of incurring her displeasure.

Miss Nancy retired weeping, too sensible of her duty to dispute the commands of a parent: and two years more elapsed without any addition being made to her improvements, or any alteration in the conduct of her illiterate governess. About the time that she attained her ninth year, Mr. Granville, (a gentleman who was joint trustee with her mamma, but resided at some distance from them) came unexpectedly to pay her a visit, and brought with him his only daughter, a young lady no less remarkable for the accomplishments of her mind than the elegance of her person. Miss Gran-

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ville was no more than fifteen; but a liberal education, joined to a fine understanding, had so taken off every appearance of childish levity, that persons unacquainted with her age might, without wronging their judgment, pronounce her twenty: what still more favoured the deception, was her uncommon gravity, so totally reverse to the character of the widow, whose giddy volatile behaviour rendered her contemptible in the eyes of every sensible and discreet person. Mr. Granville had heard of the impropriety of her conduct, and proposed this visit merely for the sake of the neglected orphan; for such she might justly be called, as she experienced not the smallest degree of a mother's tenderness.

LETTER

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LETTER VI.

MRS. Craven received her visitors with a politeness natural to those acquainted with the world; but at the same time would have gladly dispensed with their company, for she regarded them rather as a restraint upon her pleasures, and spies over her actions, than as friends whom she ought to have esteemed, if only out of respect to the memory of the deceased.

On their arrival they found her surrounded by a group of gay, laughing, volatile beings like herself; the male part were flattering her vanity by a thousand ill-placed compliments, and the female dividing their attention between scandal and spadille.

The entrance of Miss Granville, (whom she had often represented as an awkward, blushing, country girl) drew

every eye from the object on which it was before engaged. She advanced with an easy unaffected air towards the widow; and, after addressing her with a dignity peculiar to herself, saluted the rest of the company, and begging she might be no interruption to their amusement, sat down by the card-table. The gentlemen had before excused themselves from cards; but they now proposed to make a party, merely with a view of being near the fair stranger, and another pack of cards was immediately called for. As soon as they were brought, one of the gentlemen stepped towards Miss Granville, and, with an affected air of freedom, intreated her to honour him so far as to be goddess of their table, declaring at the same time she was the only object who could have made him alter his resolution, for a bad run of ill-luck the evening before had forced from him a vow never more to touch a card.

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a card. Unembarrassed by the compliment, she replied, that she never played, and had she even been fond of that amusement, no consideration should have tempted her to have been instrumental to the breaking of a vow, which, in her sentiments, ought to be most religiously adhered to. Never play! was echoed by the company.

“And pray Miss, if you never play,” (says one of the ladies) “what do you do to pass away your time?”

“Why, Madam, if you will excuse my bluntness,” replied Mr. Granville, (fearing his daughter would be confused by their impertinence)

“I’ll tell you how she passes it. In the morning she generally rises by six, and, after paying her duty to her Creator, calls on another good girl of her acquaintance, and they ramble round the adjacent fields; perhaps in their way drop in upon a sick neighbour, and if indigent,

“ contribute to their relief. This
“ done, she returns to breakfast, and
“ from ten till two, which is the
“ hour at which we generally dine,
“ she busies herself in looking after
“ domestic affairs, and in giving ne-
“ cessary orders in the family; for
“ Emily is too good a girl to trouble
“ her mother with household con-
“ cerns, and I dare say would sooner
“ walk five miles to execute her
“ command, than go a land’s length
“ to partake of any diversion. Af-
“ ter dinner, either her books or
“ work engage her attention; and,
“ as I am fond of listening to her, she
“ sometimes passes whole afternoons
“ in my study reading some instruc-
“ tive author. If no visitors happen
“ to drop in, the evenings are passed
“ as the mornings, generally in walk-
“ ing; and as we retire early to rest,
“ there is no need of cards to beguile
“ the hours: her time is spent in

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“ more rational employments, and I
“ shall presume to say, (I hope with-
“ out any offence to the company)
“ that I never heard her complain of
“ lassitude or *ennui* ; a complaint so
“ peculiar to those who make plea-
“ sure their only pursuit, diversion
“ their only enjoyment !”

At the words “ More rational em-
“ ployment,” every female expressed
her disdain ; and the widow, who was
before greatly apprehensive that the
appearance of this young beauty would
diminish the number of her admirers,
began now to triumph in her superio-
rity, not in the least doubting but this
(according to her notion) absurd me-
thod of spending her time, would
give them a mean opinion of her edu-
cation and understanding. How great-
ly was she mistaken ! However liber-
tine the disposition, virtue is ever an
object of esteem and reverence. Mr.
Granville’s account of his daughter,

was not the effect of vain partiality, but solely with the view of shewing the dissipated circle how insignificantly they squandered away that time which ought to be employed on nobler objects.

Among the ladies it was productive of no better effect than envy, and a desire of depreciating that virtue which they could not imitate; but among the male part of the company, it created the highest veneration and respect for the fair Emily; so much, that every other woman appeared insignificant, nay, even contemptible in her presence.

So far from having the effect Mrs. Craven imagined, she found herself deserted; and her lovers, had they even been as numerous as those of Penelope, would have left her, to offer up their adorations at the shrine of the amiable Miss Granville.

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Finding they had so powerful an adversary, the ladies proposed breaking up the company much sooner than usual; and as the widow was too much out of humour to endeavour to detain them, the gentlemen were also under the necessity of departing; a circumstance highly pleasing to Miss Granville, who was heartily tired of their empty and impertinent compliments.

As soon as they had taken their leave, the good gentleman inquired after Miss Nancy; and her mamma, though rather unwilling, (knowing her to be dressed very unfit to see company) was obliged to introduce her. By the meanness of her appearance, and the air of dejection which clouded her face, Mr. Granville plainly discovered that report had no more than done Mrs Craven justice. Indignation for some moments kept him silent; but endeavouring to hide his emotions,

emotions, he took the neglected child by the hand, and leading her to his daughter, "This, Emily, is the
 " only surviving branch of my once-
 " estimable friend : how strongly does
 " she resemble her worthy father ! he
 " seems to live in every feature ; but
 " the countenance of the little dear
 " betrays uneasiness : what can dis-
 " turb the peace of such an inno-
 " cent ? go Nancy, embrace my
 " daughter. Emily never disobeys my
 " commands ; she will love you be-
 " cause your father was my friend,
 " and more so on account of your
 " own merit, for I have heard that
 " you are a very good girl."

" You are very good, Sir," said the little creature, animated by this mark of kindness. " I hope I shall
 " not prove myself undeserving of
 " Miss Granville's favour : " and she threw her arms round her neck, while
 a tear

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a tear of pity bedewed the cheeks of the feeling sympathetic Emily.

“Where do you go to school, my dear, that we did not see you on our first arrival?”

“I don’t go any where, Miss. I was in the nursery when you arrived.”

“O, then I suppose your mamma instructs you herself,” said Mr. Granville.

“No, Sir,” replied the child, “my mamma has no time. Mrs. Martha sometimes learns me to work a little, and as I am very fond of my book, I improve in that without much instruction.”

“Mrs. Martha instruct you, my dear! Your woman then, I suppose, madam,” (turning to Mrs. Craven) “has had the benefit of a good education.

“Not a very liberal one Miss, but quite sufficient to have the care of such

“such a girl as Nancy; when she
 “is a little older I must think of
 “sending her out; at present she is
 “a very dull, giddy puss, and it
 “would be only throwing the mo-
 “ney away.”

“I am sorry to hear such a cha-
 “racter of my little friend,” (replied
 Miss Granville;) “for indeed, Ma-
 “dam, if we may form any judg-
 “ment by appearances, sense beams
 “through every feature of Miss Nan-
 “cy’s face.”

The conversation for that time
 dropt, and indifferent matters supplied
 its place. Mr. Granville was not will-
 ing to confuse the widow too much,
 as she appeared quite embarrassed by
 the subject, but was determined to re-
 new it at a more seasonable period.
 However, that they might have an op-
 portunity of learning something more
 of the child’s disposition, intreated her
 mamma to give leave for her to sleep

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in his daughter's apartment during their stay at H——.

This request, though much against her inclinations, was complied with through politeness; and when Emily retired to rest, she found Mrs. Martha tutoring her young lady not to answer any questions that were asked, declaring if she did, she should be corrected in the morning. Not thinking that she had been overheard, she was going to withdraw, when Miss Granville entered the apartment, but was detained by the latter's requiring her assistance in unpacking a portmanteau, and in helping her to undress: not that Emily was one of those ladies who require the aid of a chambermaid to assist them at their toilet, she despised all that fashionable parade; but was desirous of being a little acquainted with this same Mrs. Martha, whom the widow's caprice had raised to
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the honour of being governess to her daughter.

“Your young lady seems a pretty, sensible, little creature: has she always that serious look, Mrs. Martha?”

“Why, to be shure, Madam, I can’t say as how Miss Nancy is the cheerfullst child I ever knew. I’m shure as how I takes as much pains as eny body can to complish her a little; but she has no sperits to larn anything, and so confated of her own nolidge that she thinks she noes more than eny body can teech her. I’m shure I loves her as if she was my own child, if its only for the sake of my misses, for a better woman never lived than she is to her sarvants.”

This elegant speech was quite specimen enough of Mrs. Martha’s erudition. There was no need of more to convince the discerning Emily that she

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she was a person wholly improper to be intrusted with so important a charge; and making what haste she could to undress herself, she dismissed her from her presence, and determined to take poor Nancy home with her, if it were possible to gain the consent of her thoughtless inconsiderate mother.

She slept but little, her thoughts were so much engaged, in reflecting on the conduct of parents who can thus cruelly neglect their offspring, and leave to the care of fate and strangers, what ought to be the most pleasing object of their attention. Eager to put her friendly scheme in execution, she rose at her usual hour; and tapping at her father's door, as she went down stairs, he very soon joined her in the garden. As the widow seldom breakfasted till ten, they had quite time enough to settle their plan; and it was agreed (if they could not

without

without difficulty persuade her to give leave for Miss Nancy to accompany them home) that Mr. Granville, as he was left in equal power, should insist upon her being immediately sent to school, that she might receive an education suitable to her birth and fortune.

After breakfast, a walk in the park was proposed, and through her guardian's intercession Nancy became one of the party (an indulgence she had never before experienced.) The sensible and pertinent observations she made on every object that passed them, confirmed Miss Granville in her opinion of her understanding; and making it an instrument of introducing her favourite subject, "I wonder, Madam," said she to Mrs. Craven, "that you should ever leave this engaging little creature at home; her artless conversation would afford more charms for me, than any
" amuse-

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"amusement whatsoever. I must, I
"believe, beg the favour of you to
"give me leave to take her home with
"us, to spend a few weeks with my
"mamma; she would be quite
"delighted with her innocent re-
"marks."

"You do me great honour, Miss
"Granville, but Nancy would be a
"troublesome visiter; another sum-
"mer she will be more a woman, till
"then we must beg leave to decline
"the acceptance of your obliging in-
"vitation."

This answer was not at all satisfacto-
ry to Emily: she was at all events deter-
mined to gain her point, and turning
to her father, "You will join with
"me in interceding for Miss Nan-
"cy's company; will you not, Sir?
"Indeed, Madam, we must not be
"denied."

"Certainly;" answered Mr. Gran-
ville, "as I'm convinced such an ex-

G

"curfion

“ curfion would be extremely beneficial to my little friend ; and it is highly necessary she should begin to see something more of the world. I dare say Mrs. Craven will have nothing to say against it.”

“ Not this summer, Sir. She is by far too young to commence visiter, and besides I should be quite dull without her ; when I have no other amusement, I generally make her my companion.”

A long altercation ensued, and after making use of every persuasion they were master of, Miss Nancy had leave to spend a fortnight with them ; but her mamma was quite out of humour the remainder of the day.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

HAVING gained their point they were not desirous of lengthening their visit, but in a day or two afterwards took their leave of H—— and left the widow to renew a life of vanity and pleasure. On their arrival at the farm, Miss Nancy was consigned to the care of the several masters who had attended Miss Granville, and soon discovered the finest understanding they met with in a child of such tender years; and to that uncommon sedateness and attention, was united the most quick and lively genius. The great progress she made in her improvements endeared her so much to all the family, that every one regretted the thoughts of her being again resigned to the care of an illiterate chambermaid, and wished to retain her always with them. Mr. Gran-

84 LETTERS ON

ville saw, with pleasure, how greatly she improved; and when her mamma sent for her, shewed so much of his power as guardian, as to tell the messenger he could not think of parting from her at present, a fortnight having wrought so great a change, that if she continued under his care he had the greatest reason to hope she would, in a few years, become as accomplished as she was now amiable.

This account was not at all satisfactory to Mrs. Craven, who was not the least desirous of her daughter's improvement, especially as she thought it reflected on her own conduct by supposing her incapable of seeing her properly educated; and she immediately dispatched a second messenger to Mr. Granville, acquainting him, that she thought herself quite a sufficient judge of what was necessary to the interest of her child, without the assistance of any other person, and desired

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desired he would not think of detaining her any longer, as she would on no consideration consent to her continuance at the farm.

“ The child is certainly her’s,” said Mr. Granville, on reading her letter, “ and I have no right to dispute a mother’s authority ; but if that mother neglects her charge, and is totally inattentive to the improvement and happiness of her child, is it not my duty to fulfil the trust reposed in me by her father ? I will do it : it is a tribute due to his memory, a tribute due to friendship. Nancy shall be my care ! and to my own conscience, not to her thoughtless parent, will I answer for the effect, or appeal to for a plaudit to my conduct !”

He then ordered the horses to be put to his chaise, and reached H— almost as soon as the messenger. The widow was gone to a neighbouring

assembly, and did not return till two or three in the morning. Mr. Granville not supposing she would be earlier, retired to rest at his usual hour, and at breakfast-time did himself the honour of attending her.

The usual compliments over, she enquired for her daughter, telling Mr. Granville, she did not suppose him so defective in good-breeding and complaisance, as to dispute the commands of a woman that were empowered by every tie of interest and affection; and added, that if Nancy was such an undutiful puss as to desire to alienate herself from her mother, she should have imagined a man of his judgment would have known better than to have encouraged her in a deviation from her duty.

“ Pardon me, Madam,” replied he, “ if I tell you that you much misinterpret my meaning. In this, as in every other action of my life, I consult both the interest and happiness

FEMALE EDUCATION. 87

“ piness of the parties concerned ; and
“ much against my inclinations it is,
“ that I am necessitated to speak a
“ truth that may appear like a re-
“ flection on your conduct.

“ Whether through inattention of
“ your servant, or to some other cause,
“ I know not, but most certain it is,
“ that your daughter has been most
“ sadly neglected ; and had she not
“ been born with propensities natu-
“ rally good, her disposition must, by
“ this time, have been inevitably ruin-
“ ed.”

“ What do you mean to infer,
“ Sir? too much out of patience to
listen to any more. “ Is there any
“ thing in my conduct which you,
“ or any one else dare to censure?
“ because I don’t rise with the sun,
“ spend my time in visiting the sick,
“ and making whey-poffets, I sup-
“ pose I am to be branded with a

“ thousand indiscretions. I’ll be even

“ with the malevolent hussy.”

“ Be cool, Madam : I assure you,

“ so far from being malevolent, Miss

“ Nancy is the best-disposed child

“ I ever knew ; and I dare affirm,

“ was never heard to speak a disre-

“ spectful word of any one : she en-

“ tertains too just a sense of her duty

“ to depreciate a parent. Out of re-

“ spect to my departed friend, I can-

“ not help interesting myself in the

“ welfare of his offspring : it is on

“ that account I take the liberty of

“ advising that due care be taken of

“ your daughter’s education and mo-

“ rals ; if not agreeable for her to

“ continue in my family, let her be

“ sent to some creditable boarding-

“ school, and receive every instruc-

“ tion proper for her years : if the

“ former is objected to, as her guar-

“ dian, I shall insist upon the latter.”

This

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This was too much to be borne.
“ Calumniator ! insolent ! unmanly ! ”
were all uttered in a breath ; and, almost choked with passion, she flung herself on a sofa, and a silence of some minutes ensued : at last, recovering herself, “ And pray, Mr. Granville, what is there in my conduct that can be reasonably objected to, or that renders me unfit to have the management of my own child ? ”

“ Will you, without taking offence, Madam, permit me to be candid ? ”

“ By all means, Sir,”

“ Why then, Madam, I will tell you my true sentiments on the affair. It is your too great propensity to public amusements, to cards, and every other fashionable diversion ; this, joined to an entire inattention to home, and a total neglect of all domestic concerns, render you unfit for the trust you
“ mention,

“ mention. A lady who makes pleasure her chief pursuit, can never fulfil the duties of a mother.”

“ A mighty pretty set of foibles ! and for heaven’s sake, Sir, who can have acquainted you of all this, but the little lady in dispute ?”

“ All the world, Madam; which I hope you will allow is a proof of its authenticity. You have the character of a sprightly vivacious widow, one who is perfectly acquainted with the *bon ton*, and qualified to shine in the most brilliant assembly ; but, at the same time, they do not scruple to say, that you are deficient in the qualifications which should mark the character of a matron. I would not have gone so far, but I think you have a sufficient share of good sense to take the hint ; especially as it proceeds from disinterested friendship,

“ and

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“ and is the mere effect of good
“ will to the relict of my friend.”

“ I hope, Sir, you do not presume
“ to usurp authority over me also : if
“ Mr. Craven, (out of a mistaken
“ notion of your good sense and in-
“ tegrity) appointed you guardian to
“ his daughter, he did not to his
“ widow ; and you may assure yourself
“ I shall pay no regard to these insolent
“ reproofs. If you can prove your
“ power over the girl about whom
“ you make such ado, use your plea-
“ sure ; till then I shall let her know
“ that I am her mother.”

Farther arguments were useless.
Mr. Granville waited no longer for
the consent of her mamma, but order-
ing every thing necessary, about three
weeks afterwards sent her to one of
the most eminent schools in the me-
tropolis, with strict orders to the go-
verness not to neglect any thing that
might

might tend either to improve or accomplish her.

When she had been there about a twelvemonth, Mrs. Craven married an officer in the Irish brigades, who had nothing to recommend him, but his commission and a competent stock of assurance; but providentially Miss Nancy's fortune was too well secured to admit of a diminution, otherwise she would have experienced the most cruel effects of a mother's folly.

Her holidays were generally spent with her guardian; and sometimes with ladies of his daughter's acquaintance, or her own school-mates; for never was a young lady more beloved or more generally carested; but she very seldom made a visit to her mamma unless in company with Miss Granville, who esteemed her equally as a sister, and fearing Mrs. Macluen would renew unkindness, always chose to accompany her in the excursion.

When

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When she had been at school about six years, a relation of the Granville family who had large estates abroad, wrote over to them, desiring they would leave England as soon as possible, his health being in a very precarious way ; and that as they were his nearest friends, it would give him pleasure to be personally acquainted with them, that he might have the sanction of his own conscience for leaving them eight hundred a year.

Mr. Granville would gladly have been excused from this voyage, but had heard so much of his cousin's oddities, that he was fearful of incurring his displeasure ; and thinking it might still more complete the manners of his daughter, it was agreed for Mrs. Granville and Emily to accompany him, as soon as the necessary preparations were made.

A letter was immediately dispatched to Miss Craven, acquainting her
of

of their intended voyage; and another from Emily, in which she much lamented so long a separation from her friend, and intreated her to neglect no opportunity of writing during their absence, which she hoped would not exceed seven or eight months.

Words cannot depict the uneasiness of poor Nancy on reading her friend's letter. She, for some minutes, shed tears; but recollecting herself, "How ungenerous am I!" cried she, "to regret what is of such infinite advantage to my Emily! I should rather thank Heaven for her absence, as it is attended with circumstances so extremely favourable to her interest. It is to the highest degree selfish in me, who am but an individual, to lament the establishment of a whole worthy family, because it deprives me of the society of the friends I most on earth esteem, and who, next to a parent, have the
" greatest

FEMALE EDUCATION. 95

“greatest right to my affection. A-
“way such mean ungenerous thoughts!
“what are these considerations, when
“balanced with their happiness and
“interest! It is over; joy shall take
“place of grief!” and she sat down
immediately with the greatest com-
posure to write them a letter of
congratulation in which she grate-
fully acknowledged their goodness to
her, and sincerely wished them an
auspicious voyage.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

WHEN Mr. Granville had been about two months abroad, a merchant, of great eminence and opulent fortune, came one day to pay his respects to Mr. Van Moorfel (his cousin); and Miss Granville being present, the beauty of her person, joined to her mental accomplishments, wrought so powerful an effect on his heart, that after a few weeks acquaintance with the family, he made proposals of marriage to her father.

Mr. Granville was too tender a parent to give a decisive answer to any thing of that kind, without first consulting his daughter's inclinations; but genteely thanked Mr. Molineux for the honour he did them, and assured him, if Emily entertained any sentiments in his favour, he should be extremely happy in the alliance.

That

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That evening he had no opportunity of introducing the subject; but next morning happening to meet her in her usual walk, "What think you, Emily, of Mr. Molineux?" said he. "I think he is by far the most agreeable man who visits our good cousin."

"I am of your opinion, Sir," replied she, very innocently. "The judicious manner in which he expatiates on every subject that is introduced, and his extreme cautiousness of giving any one offence, must engage the esteem of every discerning person; but what most recommends him to me, is the uncommon solidity of his behaviour, and yet has the appearance of a very young man: two virtues that are very rarely united!"

A servant just then coming to acquaint Mr. Granville that his cousin would be glad to speak with him in

H

his

his chamber, he left her to pursue her walk, and returned to the house: his thoughts quite engaged on what had just past. He has her esteem, however, (thought he); but that is not quite enough, I will try her still farther. Accordingly when Mr. Molineux next came, he jocosely wished him joy on his intended marriage; and turning to his daughter, "There are
" also other people, you see, Emily,
" who think well of this gentleman,
" or he would not think of entering
" into the bonds of Hymen. I was
" going to mention his engagement
" this morning, had not the servant
" interrupted us; but it seems he is
" so very private in the affair, that
" none of his friends are acquainted
" with the lady. You are a little
" bit of a favourite: try if you can
" not extract the secret."

"It is a piece of news," replied Miss Granville, her face crimsoned over

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over with blushes, "that I never
 " heard before : doubtless Mr. Molineux has his reasons for concealing
 " the lady's name ; it would therefore
 " be extremely impertinent in me to
 " aim at a discovery. Whoever she
 " is," continued she, endeavouring
 to hide her embarrassment, which was
 much too visible to escape notice, "I
 " dare say, she is a lady whose good
 " sense and mental endowments render
 " her deserving his partiality.
 " Mr. Molineux is a gentleman of
 " too much discernment to place his
 " affections on an unworthy object,
 " and whenever he marries, my best
 " wishes will attend him."

" Mr. Granville only jokes, Madam : I am not so happy as to merit the affection of any lady : there
 " is one indeed" (the fair face of Emily was again covered with blushes)
 " whose partiality would render me
 " the happiest of beings ; but that

“ has never given me the slightest
 “ reason to think that I ever engaged
 “ a moment of her thoughts.”

“ That lady, Sir, must then be
 “ one with whom you have had but
 “ little acquaintance, otherwise 'tis
 “ impossible she should long remain
 “ insensible to your merit.”

Such a *naïveté* accompanied this speech, that he could no longer resist the impulse of his heart, but, emboldened by a look of approbation from her father, he threw himself at her feet, and in the most sincere and generous terms owned his passion, and declared it was she alone who was necessary to his happiness.

Mr. Granville had, during this scene, slipped out of the room, that the young couple might have full opportunity of coming to an *eclaircissement*; but Emily, though she had just before averred his merit, was so confused by a personal application, that it was
 some

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some minutes before she could return an answer. Had she consulted only her inclinations, she would have immediately declared her resolutions in his favour; but in that, as in every affair, she waited till reason and reflection had given sanction to her wishes. Happy for our sex were they all possessed of her discretion!

Mr. Molineux seeing her hesitate, imagined she waited for Mr. Granville's consent to confirm his happiness, and therefore assured her that he had permitted him to urge his suit. "I was too well acquainted with the rectitude of your heart, Madam," added he, "to dare to address to you on a subject of so serious a nature, without first gaining the approbation of your father."

This, though it would have been sufficient to have created the aversion of most of our modern daughters, gave her the most exalted opinion of

his good sense ; but, ever on her guard, she declined giving a positive answer till she had consulted her mamma ; and in a sprightly manner recommending the virtues of patience, left him to his own reflections.

In a business of this solemn nature, she was afraid to rely on her own judgment, lest partiality should overcome reason, and determined to give ear to a no-less-powerful monitor than the latter ; but, concealing the emotions of her heart, implicitly observed the advice given in the following lines :

Reluctant hear the first address,

Think often, ere you answer—Yes.

Mrs. Granville had been acquainted with the proposals of Mr. Molineux, and therefore was not in the least surprised that her daughter should take the first convenient opportunity of intreating her advice ; for even in things of the most trivial nature, she seldom trusted to her own, but with the most
amiable

FEMALE EDUCATION. 103

amiable diffidence, submitted to her maturer judgment.

When they had some time conversed on this subject, "You have ever, my dear mamma," said she, "condescended to be my director; do not then deny me the consolation of your advice in this important affair. If you have ever discerned in the behaviour of Mr. Molineux the most trifling tendency towards immorality, do not scruple to remark it. The heart is a deceitful counsellor, it can descry no faults in the object of its affection. I have turned and twisted it a thousand ways, yet cannot make it own that Mr. Molineux has a single foible; an unprejudiced person is therefore the only proper judge of his merit."

"And such, my dear Emily," replied Mrs. Granville, "must ever hold him in the highest estimation. From almost the first time of seeing

“ him, I secretly wished that you
 “ might make a virtuous impression
 “ on his heart ; and must confess that
 “ it afforded me unspeakable satisfac-
 “ tion, when your father acquainted
 “ me that my wishes were propitious.
 “ If he has any failings, (from which
 “ the best of us are not entirely ex-
 “ empt) he most cautiously avoids
 “ displaying them ; but I am partial
 “ enough to believe that a smaller
 “ share of follies never fell to the lot
 “ of man.”

“ How happy am I, my dear mam-
 “ ma, to find that our opinions coin-
 “ cide ! greatly as I am attached to
 “ Mr. Molineux, I would on no con-
 “ sideration listen to his addresses, if
 “ not authorized by your consent ;
 “ but as an alliance with him, is the
 “ wish of both yourself and Mr.
 “ Granville, I shall no longer endea-
 “ vour to disguise my sentiments,
 “ but treat him with that sincerity a
 man

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“man of merit has reason to expect
“from a woman of virtuous princi-
“ples.”

After having some time dwelt upon
a subject so pleasing to them both, a
doubt arose that clouded all their joy.
Religion, though of no importance in
the generality of unions, was to them
a matter of the most serious considera-
tion; and it just then occurred to Emi-
ly, that she had never heard Mr. Mo-
lineux make mention of his. “If he
“should not be a protestant, Ma-
“dam!” exclaimed she; “Grant,
“O gracious Heaven, that he may!
“If not, dear as I esteem him, I
“must immediately tear his cherish-
“ed image from my heart.”

“Make yourself easy on that head,
“my dear,” said her father, who just
then entered the room; “Mr. Mo-
“lineux is a protestant, and possessed
“also of every virtue I should wish
“for in a son. His fortune too is
“more

“ more than my most sanguine wishes
 “ could have hoped for ; and, to com-
 “ plete your happiness, it is the desire
 “ of our cousin that I should settle
 “ here myself.”

“ But what then, Sir, is to become
 “ of my poor Nancy ? she must a-
 “ gain return to her dissipated mo-
 “ ther.”

“ At present I suppose she will
 “ chuse to continue with her gover-
 “ ness : but when she leaves school,
 “ if she be not particularly attached to
 “ her own country, I will make her an
 “ offer of residing with us here : tho’
 “ the seas divide us, I will still shew
 “ myself her guardian.”

The thoughts of being separated
 from her friend, was the only reason
 Miss Granville had to regret marry-
 ing in a foreign country ; but her
 father’s kind assurance of giving Miss
 Craven an invitation to reside with
 him at Antwerp, inspired her heart
 with

2

FEMALE EDUCATION. 107

with gladness, and, in the height of her joy, she sat down to acquaint her dearest Nancy of her intended nuptials, and the future pleasure she proposed in her society.

As the union between Emily and Mr. Molineux, was perfectly agreeable to Mr. Van Moorfel, he made a generous addition to her fortune, and as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, the wedding was solemnized at one of his country-seats. Every one but Miss Craven had reason to rejoice at this event; but she had no hopes of again enjoying the sweets of friendship in the society of her beloved Emily, Mrs. Macluen having wrote to desire she would think of quitting her governess, as the ill state of her health would not permit her to go out, and a girl therefore of her retired domestic turn, would now be the most agreeable companion. Nancy was too sensible of her duty to re-
fuse

fuse a request, that she looked upon as the effect of a thorough reformation in her mother's disposition, and determined to return immediately to H—, but first sent a letter to her guardian, in which she returned the most grateful thanks for his obliging invitation, but hoped he would be kind enough to excuse her declining the acceptance of it, as it was the desire of her mamma that she should return to H—. She inclosed the copy of Mrs. Macluen's letter, and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the prospect of her returning affection.

Mr. Granville, though always willing to judge favourably, suspected there was something more in agitation than Miss Craven was aware of; but thinking it would be wrong to oppose the exertion of virtue and obedience, commended her resolution: he took care however to place a person near enough to watch over the conduct of

Mrs,

FEMALE EDUCATION. 109

Mrs. Macluen, not doubting but she had some scheme in embryo, that was intended to effect the ruin of her daughter.

In this he was not mistaken : for Mr. Craven, having devised in his will, that upon the day of marriage eight thousand pounds was to be paid to his daughter ; and if she died unmarried his widow was to enjoy it, not only during her own life, but to have the full disposal of it afterwards ; it suggested to them a method of enjoying it during her life, and to this end it was that she had received such an affectionate invitation.

Having heard that both the personal and mental accomplishments of her daughter had long been the general topic, she began to be under the greatest concern lest some of those who now only admired her at a distance, should endeavour to be more intimately acquainted with her, and by that means

means frustrate her expiring hopes; she therefore affected a return of maternal affection, and with it a love of retirement, thinking by that means to seclude her from all acquaintance with the world, and dispose of her money as themselves thought proper. Indeed such a resource became highly necessary; for between the Captain's attendance at the gaming-table, and her own continual extravagancies, they had reduced their fortune to the lowest ebb; and when they found they could no longer support it, planned this scheme to save themselves from ruin.

For some time they behaved to her with such seeming affection, that she had not the least reason to doubt the sincerity of their reformation; and as their stile of living was so perfectly the reverse to their former extravagance, she believed it to be the effect of choice rather than an alteration of circumstances.

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As the disposition of Miss Craven was goodness itself, she entertained not the most trifling suspicion of their ill intentions towards her, but, fully persuaded that they would ever continue the same, made the generous offer of appropriating one half the yearly interest of her fortune to their own private expences, saying, that as she never indulged herself in public amusements, nor consulted anything more than neatness in her appearance, the remainder would be quite as much as she should annually expend.

Mrs. Macluen assured her she should lose nothing by this act of generosity; for she had a large sum in the hands of her banker, which her husband was unacquainted with, and which at her death she intended bequeathing her, and behaved so seemingly affectionate, that Nancy did not once repent the sacrifice she had made, but every letter to her guardians was filled with
enco-

encomiums on the conduct of her mother.

“What a tedious story are you telling” (cries my Sophy); but as it is not only fact, but productive of a moral that may be highly serviceable to those who are in a similar situation, I shall not pretend to abridge it, so must intreat your excuse if I trespass a little longer on your patience.

LETTER

tage that belonged to one of his tenants, but had no suspicion of its being the fair one of whom he was in pursuit. Curiosity, ever predominant, prompted him to follow her; and as the good man of the house had long laboured under an infirmity, which confined him to his bed, he had a plausible excuse for so doing. On entering the chamber of the sick, the first object that presented itself was the young lady whom he now discovered to be Miss Craven. Upon the sight of a stranger she was immediately going to retire; but not willing to lose an opportunity so extremely favourable, he intreated her not to be alarmed at the presence of one who had long wished for the pleasure of her acquaintance; adding, that he was a neighbour of her father's, and as they lived contiguous to each other, it would give him unspeakable satisfaction if he might be permitted to visit

FEMALE EDUCATION. 115

visit her in the character of a friend. There was something uncommonly blunt in this address, but Mr. Meadows was no flatterer; his countenance bespoke an honest heart, and his appearance was such as must recommend him even to a stranger. Some ladies would have assumed the most imperious airs, and termed him an ill-bred insolent fellow; but not so Miss Craven: she genteely thanked him for the honour he did her, and said she made no doubt but Mr. Mac-luen would be happy in his acquaintance; then wishing him a good morning, left the cottage, and directed her course towards the next, the inhabitants of which were equal partakers of her bounty. As soon as she was gone, the poor man in the fulness of his heart, began to extol the goodness and liberality of his benefactress. "Never was there so excellent a young lady!" It is impossible, Sir,

" to tell you half her virtues : her
 " father was a good man, but from
 " his death, 'till the time Miss Nan-
 " cy left school, not one of us expe-
 " rienced the most trifling kindness
 " from his widow : the most dreadful
 " story had no effect upon her obdu-
 " rate heart ; and since her second
 " marriage she has (if possible) been
 " less susceptible of pity than before :
 " but this dear young lady makes full
 " amends for it all : her heart and
 " purse are ever open to relieve di-
 " stress, and when she gives, it is in
 " such a manner as would make a
 " stranger rather imagine she was
 " paying a debt than bestowing cha-
 " rity. I have heard her often say,
 " she experiences more real satisfac-
 " tion in these acts of liberality, than
 " the practice of them can possibly
 " convey to the receivers. In a word,
 " Sir, it is impossible for you to con-
 " ceive what a blessing she is to the
 " whole

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“whole parish, though, as one may
“say, but a mere child in age, for I
“suppose she is but just turned of
“seventeen.”

If Mr. Meadows was before enamoured of her person, this intelligence must certainly make a much deeper impression; for he was one of those young men who despised external appearance, if not blended with charms more lasting; and would much sooner chuse a wife qualified to fulfil the social duties of life, than one who studied only its ornamental graces. Nancy was perfectly formed to make him happy: she possessed every virtue that a man of merit need wish for in a wife, and by an uncommon similarity of sentiments they seemed destined for each other.

An equal stranger to falsehood or disguise, she no sooner returned than she acquainted her mamma with the accidental meeting between Mr. Meadows

and herself; and, with her usual frankness, declared, she was much surprised that Mr. Macluen should not cultivate such an agreeable acquaintance.

“His countenance bespeaks sincerity, Madam,” added she, “and a virtue so rarely met with must certainly render him estimable: if I had been ever so much disposed to resent the liberty of his address, the open artless manner in which it was delivered, would have quite disarmed my anger.”

“I am sorry, child, to find you have so susceptible a heart; but remember our sex should not build too much upon appearances. I am no stranger to the character of Mr. Meadows; but you are young—it is excusable.”

There was something so imperious in this speech, so different from any thing she had ever met with since her return to her mamma, that a starting
tear

FEMALE EDUCATION. 119

tear plainly shewed how greatly it affected her. "I did not know, Madam," said she, "that my heart had any thing to do in this affair. I spoke only in general terms : if I expressed myself with warmth, it was because I was pleased with his open ingenuous manner ; but if there be any thing blameable in freely speaking my opinion, I am extremely sorry I should be guilty of such an absurdity.

"Do not be out of temper, Nancy, more young people than you are struck with external appearances ; there is not the least absurdity in speaking your mind, but as I have rather more knowledge of Mr. Meadows than yourself, I think it highly necessary to caution you against as an artful insinuating fellow ; one, who if he once gets footing in a family is never to be got rid of."

I 4 Miss

Miss Craven now heartily repented her ingenuousness, for notwithstanding what Mrs. Macluen had said, she was strongly prepossessed that he was a worthy character; but as she ever made inclination subservient to duty, determined for the future most cautiously to avoid the mention of his name.

It was not so with Mr. Meadows: from the minute that she so condescendingly assured him he would be welcome at Mr. Macluen's, he thought of nothing else, and fixed as early a period as possible for his first visit. To that intent he sent a genteel card about three days afterwards; but received for answer, that all the family were indispensably engaged. Chagrined at his disappointment, and much more so to find almost a week elapsed and no invitation, he immediately guessed at the true cause of their shyness; and determined to have recourse to art if

FEMALE EDUCATION, 121

if he could obtain an acquaintance with Miss Craven by no other means. Accordingly he took a ride the next morning; and, on pretence of inquiring after a pointer that had strayed from him, called at Mr. Macluen's. Nancy was standing at the window when he came; but instead of opening the door, went into the next room to her mamma, and after telling her who it was, walked up stairs.

Mrs. Macluen's countenance plainly discovered that she was much alarmed at the presence of Mr. Meadows; but, endeavouring to hide her confusion, she affected to be pleased at his visit, and assured him Mr. Macluen had been quite uneasy that he should be obligated to refuse seeing him the preceding week, but was obliged to pay a visit to a friend some miles distant, and had been engaged every day since; hoped, however, to be at liberty to receive him as soon as they had

had been to London, which would not take them up more than a fortnight. He politely thanked her for her civility; and said, an intimacy with the family would give him a great deal of pleasure. "You have a daughter too, Madam," added he, "who appears to be an amiable young lady: my sister would, I dare say, be happy in her acquaintance."

"Nancy is much obliged to you, Sir, for the honour you do her, but she is of such a retired domestic turn that she takes very little delight in company; reading is the only amusement for which she has any taste."

By prolonging the conversation he was in hopes that he should have an opportunity of seeing Miss Craven before he left the house; but after staying above an hour and half without her making her appearance, he was
going

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going to take his leave, when, recollecting himself that Mrs. Macluen was formerly extremely fond of dancing, he intreated she would favour him with her company the ensuing evening, as he had invited a few select friends with a view of forming a little ball.

Too fond of exhibiting her small remains of beauty to refuse an opportunity of displaying it in public, she promised to attend him; and he took his leave, quite exhilarated with the hopes of his dear Nancy being one of the party.

Though Mrs. Macluen had not resolution enough to refuse going herself, she had too much address to suffer her daughter to accompany her; but, pretending to be quite exasperated at his insolence in calling, forbore mentioning any thing of the invitation, and endeavoured still more to convince her that he was entirely unworthy

worthy the attention of people of fashion. She caused a card of her own writing to be delivered to her the next morning while they were at breakfast, intimating that an acquaintance at M——, (a village about two miles distant) would be glad of her company in the afternoon, and after appearing rather undetermined for some minutes, she at last desired the servant to acquaint his lady she would wait on her. Miss Nancy was rather surpris'd at this, as her mamma had for some time declined every kind of visits; but imagining that she should accompany her, did not take any trouble to discover the motive of this sudden change. In this, however, she was mistaken; for when Mrs. Mac-luen retired to dress, she had no orders to change her's.

This circumstance alarmed her: but her astonishment was much more increased when her mamma descended the

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the stairs in full dress, and telling her to amuse herself with her books till her return, stept into the chaise without even saying at what hour she might expect her.

As soon as the chaise stopt at the gate, Mr. Meadows ran out to welcome the ladies : but how greatly was he disappointed to find only one ; and that one (instead of his blooming artless girl) her dissipated mother, adorned with every youthful ornament her worn-out fancy could invent. “ I thought—I thought, Madam,” said he, “ we should have had the pleasure of Miss Craven’s company : my sister will I am sure be much disappointed.”

“ The disappointment will, I believe, be rather on the side of your sister’s brother” (affecting to joke with him) ; “ but do not, my good Sir, make yourself uneasy ; some less-cruel fair will, I dare say, condescend

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“scend to supply the deficiency, occasioned by Miss Craven’s absence. I could not persuade her to come with me; what ails the child I cannot think, but of late she has discovered such symptoms of melancholy as almost border upon insanity.”

“It may perhaps, Madam, be owing to too close a confinement; the young lady does not, I am sure, appear to be naturally of a melancholic disposition.”

“To be candid, Sir, (for I think I may rely on your honour not to make it public) poor Nancy inherits it from her father; it is a disorder that has long been in the family, and I am afraid, whenever she marries, will descend to the next generation.”

At the conclusion of this speech every feature of Meadows underwent a change; the most pallid hue spread
itself

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itself over his whole countenance : he led Mrs. Macluen to the company, but hardly spoke another word during the remainder of the evening. In vain did he endeavour to assume a gaiety that was a stranger to his heart ; every one might plainly perceive that he laboured under some secret uneasiness, and by endeavouring to conceal it his distress became more visible. Mrs. Macluen beheld the change with pleasure, and triumphed in her too-successful scheme. Before she took her leave, she intreated him not to forget his engagement ; adding, that Mr. Macluen would certainly expect him, and at the same time give a formal invitation to his sister.

Poor Meadows returned only a slight answer to her civilities : he was petrified by her intelligence, but could not help styling her a monster in nature, who could without emotion expose the infirmities of her child ;

one too who was in every other respect an example to her sex. It nevertheless served not to weaken his attachment: his thoughts were ever engaged on the dear amiable (but as he then thought her, unfortunate) girl, but providence forbad him to cultivate the acquaintance; and, to avoid the temptation of her charms, he not only declined visiting Mr. Macluen, but, more effectually to banish her image from his heart, retired to one of his country-houses above fifty miles distance from —.

The crafty mother had now obtained her ends, and prided herself much on the fertility of her invention. She kept much more company indeed than she had done some months before; but, as there was no apparent impropriety in her conduct, Miss Nancy continued to behave with her usual obedience, and was, in the true sense
of

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of the word, an exemplary daughter.

Secure as this artful woman thought herself in the possession of her daughter's fortune, she had still another enemy to combat with. Vice is very seldom permitted to prevail, and though even for a time allowed to pursue its unlawful course, is generally stopped ere it arrives at its destined goal. So it happened with Mrs. Macluen. Another gentleman of considerable fortune chanced to meet with Miss Craven at the house of a friend, and became equally enamoured of her virtues; he did not, like Mr. Meadows, wait for a seasonable opportunity of avowing his passion, but immediately waited on her mamma, and desired to be introduced to her as a lover. He was likewise honoured with her confidence; and had a thousand offered themselves as candidates for her daughter's affection, they would all have experienced

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the same degree of partiality. She would have endeavoured, as before, to prepossess them all with a belief of her insanity.

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LETTER X.

MR. Resdin was not so easily persuaded of what he was unwilling to believe; but finding that Miss Craven had a guardian abroad, wrote to him immediately, and acquainted him with what Mrs. Macluen had made known to him; adding, that he was greatly prejudiced in favour of the young lady, but if that was the case, must be necessitated to decline all pretensions to her; hoped therefore he would be ingenuous in acquainting him whether it was an hereditary disorder or not, as he had some suspicions of its existing only in the head of her mamma, and which for certain reasons it was her interest to propagate.

Words are too weak to express the feelings of Mr. Granville on perusing this epistle! He several times

changed colour : at length, throwing down the letter, "What a scene of
" villainy is here laid open ! Poor
" Nancy ! I ever suspected some foul
" play was intended thee ; but this
" exceeds all I could have thought
" of. Ungrateful mother ! By what
" artful means dost thou endeavour
" to effect the ruin of the best of
" children." This soliloquy finished, he went into the garden (where Mrs. Granville was walking with some more ladies) and too attentive to the welfare of Miss Craven to admit of any other thoughts, immediately disclosed to her the contents of his letter.

A heart unacquainted with the wiles of imposition, and a stranger to every kind of vice, can hardly believe that a fellow-creature is capable of so much iniquity.

Mrs. Granville was endued with every virtue that can render woman
estima-

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estimable; and to hear of Mrs. Mac-luen's unnatural behaviour gave so great a shock to her spirits, that had not a flood of tears came to her relief, she must immediately have fainted.

“ Is it possible,” (cried she) “ that
“ any of our sex can be so totally de-
“ praved? Every good parent must
“ surely rejoice at the advancement
“ of a child. But this woman is
“ a monster in nature! The amia-
“ ble girl, impressed with the most
“ exalted notions of duty and obe-
“ dience, has stifled every resentment
“ of former injuries, and though at
“ liberty to pursue her own inclina-
“ tions and enjoy the interest of her
“ fortune in whatever situation she
“ thought fit, has dedicated both to
“ the service of her inhuman mo-
“ ther; and this—this is the return
“ she meets with! Go once more,
“ my dear Mr. Granville, and rescue
“ her from the hands of that vile

“ hypocritical woman ; if Mr. Resdin
“ is worthy of her, unite them : if not,
“ bring her to me, and I will be to
“ her a mother.”

Pleased to find her actuated by the same generous sentiments as himself, he immediately prepared for his departure, and as the voyage was favourable, in a short time arrived in England ; and, as soon as he was landed, repaired to the seat of Mr. Resdin, whom he thought was the first person that ought to be undeceived.

The character he heard of this gentleman in the neighbourhood, was such as greatly prepossessed him with the belief of his being an object worthy Miss Craven's attention, and, as his fortune was large and independent, flattered himself there was no obstacle to their union, but that he should have the satisfaction of seeing her happily settled before he again left England.

Words

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Words are too faint to express the joy of Mr. Resdin when he discovered how much he had been imposed on. He embraced Mr. Granville a thousand times, called him the harbinger of his happiness, and declared he should ever look on him as the most valuable of his friends.

As he had never addressed the young lady on the subject of his passion, he now intreated the favour of Mr. Granville to introduce him, and in the height of his joy presented him with a rich service of plate that had been brought home but a few days before. At another time Mr. Granville would have been offended with a behaviour that almost bordered upon frenzy; but in a lover it was excusable, and the present circumstances rendered it more so. With the greatest composure he politely thanked the young gentleman for the honour he did him, but begged leave to decline

his noble present. "You have, Sir,
 "my best wishes," added he; "but
 "this is all that I can say. I have
 "no power over the inclinations of
 "Miss Craven, should they happen
 "to be pre-engaged in favour of a
 "worthy object (a worthier she will
 "never meet with) I can on no
 "consideration attempt to oppose
 "them. In affairs of this kind the
 "heart should ever accompany the
 "hand. Mr. Resdin will not, I
 "think, be ambitious of the latter, if
 "the former is wanting.

"I should be sorry, Sir, to find
 "the young lady has a prior attach-
 "ment," replied he; "but should
 "that unfortunately happen to be
 "the case, you may assure yourself that
 "my conduct shall be consistent with
 "that honour I have on every occa-
 "sion endeavoured to maintain. My
 "notions of wedlock are too delicate
 "to wish for the possession of an object
 "whose

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“whose passion is not reciprocal. It
“is true that I adore Miss Craven ;
“but if another has gained an ascen-
“dancy in her bosom, I shall never
“attempt to alienate her affections,
“but wish her every happiness with
“the man she loves.”

There was something so noble in
Resdin's behaviour, that Mr. Gran-
ville sincerely wished his fair charge
might have hitherto remained insensi-
ble to the power of love. But fate had
ordained it otherwise. Mr. Meadows
(from their first accidental meeting at
the cottage) had made the most lasting
and durable impression ; an impres-
sion which neither him nor absence
could possibly eradicate. Yet so cau-
tiously did she conceal her passion,
that not one in the family suspected
her attachment, but attributed her de-
jection to a natural delicacy of con-
stitution, and a sedateness uncommon
for her years. The struggle was un-
doubtedly

doubtedly painful, but so refined were her notions of obedience, that sooner than give a moment's uneasiness to her mamma, she used every effort to stifle what she could not possibly overcome, and in all probability would never more have indulged a thought on matrimony had not her guardian's arrival opened her eyes to the ingratitude of Mrs. Macluen.

After severely upbraiding this inhuman mother, for the cruel imposition she had put upon Mr. Reddin, he intreated the young lady to be candid in acknowledging her sentiments; and if she had any propensities in favour of him, or any other person, to confess it ingenuously; assuring her that he sincerely interested himself in her happiness, and would use all his interest to promote it.

Unaccustomed to deceit, she frankly owned herself prejudiced in favour of Mr. Meadows, and without any reserve,

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reserve, acquainted Mr. Granville of the interview that had first given birth to her affection ; but added, that as it was disagreeable to her mamma, she had always declined his acquaintance ; and that for some unknown cause he had some months since entirely withdrawn himself from the country.

Miss Craven was yet ignorant of her mother's hypocrisy, but Mr. Granville was now determined to deceive her.

“ You have been too credulous,
“ my dear,” replied he ; “ a disposition
“ like your's is unsuspecting of de-
“ ceit, and therefore far more liable
“ to be imposed on. I am sorry to
“ expose the failings of a parent,
“ but your's, Nancy, is undeserving
“ that title. You have acted like a
“ dutiful child, and have been re-
“ warded by a series of dissimulation
“ and ill-usage. Mrs. Macluen has
“ taken every method to prevent your
“ happi-

“happiness. To compass her own
“mercenary ends, she has persuaded
“all her acquaintance to a belief
“of your insanity; and not content
“with ruining the reputation of her
“daughter, has injured the shade of
“her once best of husbands, by declaring it hereditary.”

A shock so terrible and unexpected was too much for her delicate constitution. “Have I then been deceived, Sir!” cried she; “I thought
“I had a mother. Thank heaven,
“I have, however, shewn myself a
“daughter.”

A copious shower of tears now came to her relief; and after a few minutes she resumed a sufficient share of spirits to ask by what means he had heard of Mrs. Macluen’s hypocrisy.

Mr. Granville then proceeded to inform her of Mr. Resdin’s writing to him; and added, that he could have wished for his sake, that her affections
had

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had been disengaged, but that as Mr. Meadows had been happy enough to merit the preference, he should by no means endeavour to draw them from a person, who, he made no doubt was an object worthy her partiality.

Though covered with blushes, and not a little embarrassed at the subject, the very politely acknowledged her obligations to her guardian; and modestly added, that if it could be done with propriety, it would be a great satisfaction to her to know that Mr. Meadows was undeceived; not that he might renew his friendship for her, but to take off the reflection that it had cast on the family.

“The care of that I shall take upon myself,” replied he; “but in the mean time hope you will give me leave to convey you to a place of safety: here I cannot consent to your remaining any longer.”

Grieved

Grieved to the heart to find herself treated with such unparalleled ill-usage by a parent, whose happiness she had preferred to her own, and whom she had ever made it her study to obey, she could not refuse Mr. Granville's request: but too good-natured to confound Mrs. Macluen by a personal interview, she left a note with her maid, informing her of her intended removal, but cautiously avoided a mention of the place to which she was going. So amiable was Miss Craven's disposition that she did not once upbraid her mamma with unkindness, nor harboured the most trifling sentiment of malice or revenge. She wept it is true; but at the same time that she lamented the indiscretion of a parent, would have sooner died than have suffered herself to treat her with indignity.

An eclclaircissement between Mr. Meadows and Miss Craven was soon effected

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effected by the means of Mr. Granville, and a few months afterwards they were joined in the bands of Hymen. It will be needless to say that they did honour to the state. Virtue so conspicuous as theirs must shine resplendent in every sphere of life.

Two years after her marriage, an affair happened that must for ever immortalize her name, and render her a favourite both with God and man. Mr. Macluen after having dissipated the residue of his wife's fortune, left her in a state of indigence, and had even the inhumanity to rob her of her plate and jewels, the only valuables she was then possessed of. Thus deserted and forlorn, she experienced the want of every necessary of life; and conscious of her own unworthiness, chose rather to perish in obscurity than make her distresses known to Mrs. Meadows. By mere accident this amiable woman became acquainted

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ed with her mother's unhappy situation, and the mournful recital absorbed her in the deepest melancholy. It was some time before she could discover the place of her retreat, but had no sooner found it than she flew with joy to pour the balm of pity into her wounded heart. Every injury was forgotten, every spark of resentment buried in oblivion. With the most exemplary generosity she settled on this most undeserving of parents a genteel annuity, and by this act of goodness, wrought an entire reformation in the disposition of this once-dissolute woman. She retired to a small habitation about a mile distant from the seat of Mr. Meadows, and spent the remainder of her life in sincere contrition for her past follies. She was now as remarkable for frugality as she had before been for her intemperance; and by this discreet œconomy became a friend to every indigent family

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family around her. Mrs. Meadows attended her in the decline of life with the solicitude of a daughter who had experienced all a mother's fondness, and by her assiduous tenderness softened even the infirmities of age. May every child learn from her example to submit with patience to the caprice of a parent's temper, and, though even treated with inhumanity, remember that it is far more praiseworthy to forgive than return an injury.

“ The piety of a child is sweeter
“ than the spices of Persia offered to
“ the Sun; yea, more delicious than
“ odours wafted from a field of Ara-
“ bian spices by the western gales.”

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